



David A. Clarke Jr.  
Sheriff

## Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office **NEWS RELEASE**

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### Sheriff Highlights Dangerously-Low Staffing Levels

Milwaukee, WI – Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr., is highlighting the critical need to create deputy positions to maintain public safety and avoid overtime costs incurred when deputies mandated to work double shifts. Statement from Sheriff Clarke:

Budgetary cuts at a time when crime, violence and citizens requests for service have risen exponentially, puts the public at risk. These cuts have resulted in the Sheriff's Office not being able to hire deputy sheriffs since 2002. The deputy staffing level is down 65% compared to 2002. In 2002, there were 647 deputies. Today we have 226 on active duty. The former county executive and I negotiated an appropriate staff reduction by replacing deputies working in the County Jail (in a purely corrections function) with correctional officers (COs) to reduce costs. This was achieved through attrition. The agreement was to have a ratio of around 200 CO's to work in the jail and 450 deputies for law enforcement required activity. We are dangerously below that staffing level today.

Adopted budgets, deputy staffing levels:

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
647	626	593	550	519	475	457	435	393	328	254	254	245

County Executive Chris Abele's position cuts have placed public safety in extreme jeopardy and have led to the physical burnout of deputies and correctional officers (COs) who are required to work an excessive amount of overtime. A lack of budgeted positions results in deputies and COs losing all of their off days and working double shifts on a regular basis to maintain public safety.

As noted in an editorial in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, "No one wants to see overstressed deputies unable to do their jobs; that's too much of a risk given the responsibilities at stake.... That's an intolerable situation – and an expensive one."

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**The Sheriff's Office is requesting an additional 157 deputy and CO positions in the 2015 budget cycle. Positions are needed to assist in absorbing deputies and COs who retire, are sick, injured or on vacation, and we must account for unexpected increases in workloads that occur during public safety emergencies. The hiring and training of new deputies and COs takes approximately one year. We cannot put this off any longer.**

**The requested positions would only bring deputy staffing to less than 2007 levels. To operate at a 2007 staffing level is a reasonable request. The 157 positions would be budgeted at approximately \$4.7 million, and greatly reduce our having to resort to the use of overtime, which is estimated to reach \$6.5 million this year. Hiring deputies and COs would result in saving the taxpayers about \$1.8 million. Clearly this would be a much better investment for our taxpayers.**

**As an example of unsafe budget cuts, the county executive provided only five positions for civil process service, when 16 are needed to cover the entire county. The importance of serving legal documents, specifically restraining orders and other domestic violence-related injunctions is a core duty of a Sheriff and cannot be ignored because of budget constraints, without impacting the safety of citizens.**

**A number of my special units - SWAT, Bomb Unit, Drug K-9s, lakefront and park patrols, have been targeted for elimination by the county executive. Apparently he does not understand the role those units play in supporting local law enforcement throughout the County and Southeastern Wisconsin. He doesn't realize the taxpayer savings from each local law enforcement agency not having to duplicate these assets.**

**The County Board stepped in last year and restored many of the county executive's draconian cuts, but provided no funding source, which set up a structural deficit that began on January 1, 2014.**

**It's time for the county executive to stop playing politics with public safety and reasonably fund the additional positions this community needs. He was reported to have been the funding source in recent negative TV ads accusing me of cutting gang and drug programs and for the increase in overtime usage. Now we will see how sincere he is about getting overtime under control and reducing crime and violence in Milwaukee County.**

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